The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

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WHAT SHALL I DO TO BE SAVED?

A certain lawyer (thus the records say),
Tempting the Lord, whom so he would betray,
Stood up and said, "Master, what shall I do
Eternal life to inherit?" Jesus knew
The subtle purpose, yet his answer came
Earnest and calm, without reproach or blame.

This question, ever new and ever old,
Humanity repeats, and still we hold
To Jesus' answer,—"Who would ever live,
Must love his neighbor, and to God must give
The strength of his affection, heart and mind
And soul, that so eternal life he find."

"Love God!" the unexhausted source is He
Of life and love. There flows from Him to thee
An influence that all thy soul shall fill
With power to read aright and work His will.
Thus only shall thy freedom be secure,
And thine eternal heritage endure.

Love God! The tiny babe who scarcely knows
Its mother, nestles close in sweet repose
Upon her breast. We cannot comprehend
Him whom we call Creator, Father, Friend!
Yet rest content, believing, since we must,
In love divine, which we instinctive trust.

"Love thou thy neighbor as thyself!" "Who then,"
One asks, "is he?" While in the homes of men
Sit pain and want, and vice that wears the mask
Of innocence, canst thou this question ask?
Of every race and clime, of every creed,
Thy neighbor's claims must thou not fail to heed.

When he of old who by the roadside lay
Saw two pass by and turn another way,
What thought he of their boasted godliness?
The third who stooped to aid him in distress
Samaritan might be,—a hated name!
Yet disregarded not a stranger's claim.

Ye who would seek eternal life to win,
To make life worth the living, now begin;
With all your heart and soul and strength and mind,
Love God and man, until at length ye find
The mighty law of love can ne'er deceive,—
As freely as ye give shall ye receive!

—*Charlotte C. Eliot.*

THE BLESSING OF THE PURE IN HEART.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."—MATTHEW v. 8.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." We see the truth of this saying even here on earth in many whom God permits us to meet. They are blest because they are pure in heart. We feel they have the secret of joy, of a peace which passeth understanding, which overcomes sorrow, even looks down upon pain, as it were, from a height outside themselves. They know not why they are so at rest, so happy, even in pain; but *we* know it is because they are stainless in soul. We haunt their company with pleasure. To be with them is a kind of peace for troubled hearts. They make an atmosphere in which we feel more pure. They stir in us, for the time at least, aspiration. They awaken love, animate hope. They rescue us for the time from sin.

That is their blessedness as it was Christ's. But the deepest glory of that blessedness is the sight of God. Not a future vision with

mortal eye, but a present blessedness felt within and realized in the world without. When God's righteousness, truth, and love dwell like daily friends in the house of the soul, they are our joy. When man is penetrated always with the uplifting consciousness of God's presence within him as a moral power linked to ideal love, till daily life is steeped in the light of Heaven; when man loves God because he is good and makes good, and looks forward with delight to loving him forever in the depths of righteousness; when daily he grows more righteous through his love, till sin, though it lurk on the threshold, dare not enter the house of his heart,—then man sees God, sees him in himself; yet, always in his seeing of God in himself, is, as I have said elsewhere, borne out of himself by the beauty of the vision into the infinity of God's holiness.

It is possible thus to imagine this blessedness, but to realize it or to possess it is not as yet in the power of many. But Christ did realize it, did possess it; and that which he did, when the appointed time comes, we shall also do. In that hope we live, not looking for a selfish reward as some vainly say, but desiring with a noble passion and working with a steady effort towards that divine and radiant time when we shall be free from sin and joyful in righteousness. It is not an easy battle, but we can do all things if we love enough; and the Christian purity of heart is none the less beautiful nor the less enduring in that it bears everywhere on earth the traces of the storm. The frosts of trial purify it, like sifted snow, into spotlessness; and it rises after the tempest of this world has passed away, as rise after a night of tormented hail the peaks of the Alps in the sunlight of the morning. The strife is hard, indeed, but what a glory is in the victory! Could we but realize that conquest, the possession of immortal purity, the pain of the battle would be lost in the vision. We should know what the martyr knew who bathed his hands in the flame and felt no pain.

But, though we be far from seeing God clearly in ourselves, yet it is given to us at times, when we are pure in heart, to see God through that purity in Nature and in man. When we are evil, when sin weighs on the conscience, Nature is often a silent vengeance of reproach, or we see in her the dark reflection of ourselves. But, if we are happy, bright through goodness won or through days of righteousness, all Nature then is a great music to us which God is making for His own delight and ours. We see his loveliness in every flower, in the woven web of all the clouds the weaver, wind, has spun; his majesty in the great mountains; his infinite movement in the cycles of Nature's changeful unity; his solemn order in her law; his awfulness and his brightness in the tempest and the sunlight; his love in the endless beauty into which we enter with a gay delight. There is nothing common, nothing unclean. God is seen, and the sight is joy. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

And, if we can see him thus in Nature, we have another blessedness,—those who see beauty can reveal it. They can lead men to look with a humbler and more thoughtful eye upon the beauty of the world; teach them to find a religion in Nature as well as in their own hearts; make their work in the field, their holiday among the mountains, their daily walk, even here in this cloudy city, a revelation of him, who, moving in all things, makes all things speak of his glory and his love; till men, through such teaching, learn something of that beautiful mind of Christ, which saw in the flower and the corn and the grass of the field, in the sunlight and the rain, in all the life of animals, a solemn poem of which God was the interpretation. And that also is blessedness.

But not only in Nature, but also in Man, the pure in heart see God, and there is nothing which is more blessed than this power. There is an odious penetration, won through sin, which is the contrary of it. This penetration is quick to perceive the weakness of men, the germs of folly or of wrong; but it never sees the power in the same men which balances their weakness, or the elements in them which may kill the germs of sin. It has an instinct of impurity, a scent for guilt; but it is always sure to mistake the good, to see its excess or defect, but not itself; and this inability to see good is fatal to true judgment of character. Those who cultivate this penetration know sin, because they are sinful: they do not know good, because they are proud of the vile cleverness which recognizes sin. They see the devil in man, and they are cursed thereby.

It is different with the pure in heart. Beneath evil they behold the divine, because they possess the divine; beneath wrong they see the possibilities of right; and they believe in goodness, and live and move among men with that belief. It was the essential difference of Christ's life with us. He came to see his Father in us all: he threw himself again and again in faith upon the goodness of the human soul, and, by believing in man's love and truth, drew forth human love and truth.

Whatever sin Christ saw, he saw God first in men; and he saw the sin the more truly because he saw God also in the sinner; and this double and contrasted view gave him that wondrous power he had of lifting men out of sin into union with God. He found goodness because he looked for it. He saw it because he had it.

This was a blessed life, a blessed power, and something of it may be ours if we will win some purity of heart. We shall have the joy of discovering to others the good which slumbers in them, the powers of God in their souls. Then, when we have shown to them these things, we shall have the joy of seeing them begin to believe in the possibility of their goodness; of seeing them take courage, hope, and ardor for their lives; of seeing them slowly rise, through belief in goodness within them, into self-conquest. To do that in the strength of God, as Christ our Master did it, to lead men to live up to the ideal of God within them; to help them to feel that they are God's, and that God is in them,—that is on this earth the greatest blessedness the pure in heart possess. So in this matter it is also true,—"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."—*Stopford A. Brooke.*

THE STILL HOUR.

A LITTLE SERMON.

Prune thou thy words, the thoughts control.
That o'er thee swell and throng;
They will condense within thy soul,
And change to purpose strong.

But he who lets his feelings run
In soft luxurious flow,
Shrinks when hard service must be done,
And faints at every woe.

Faith's meanest deed more favor bears,
Where heart and wills are weighed,
Than brightest transports, choicest prayers,
Which bloom their hour and fade.

—*John Henry Newman.*

Not alone by sudden surprises do we come to know how "God's gifts put man's best dreams to shame." To steady fidelity come steady growth and enlarging vision, as surely as the harvest follows the sowing. There are better things in store for you than you know. In the calendar of your future there are days marked for angelic visits. The angels may come disguised, but come they surely will. Yours be it to have for them an open door, and a house where, amid firmly knit habits and pure affections, they shall find a home.—*G. S. Merriam.*

THOU SHALT NOT STEAL.

"Have you been guilty of stealing, or cheating, or any way wronging your neighbor in buying or selling, or any other bargains or contracts?"

"Have you been accessory to another's committing any such injustice? How often? To what value?"

"Have you dishonestly kept what belongs to another?"

"Have you caused any damage to your neighbor in his house, cattle, or other goods?"

"Have you contracted debts without design to pay them, or without prospect of being able to pay them? Have you delayed or refused to pay your debts when you were able? Have you by prodigal expenses made yourself unable, and so wronged your creditors or your family?"

"Have you been guilty of usury in the loan of money?"

"Have you put off false money? How much? How often?"

"Have you professed any art, or undertaken any business, without sufficient skill or knowledge? What damage has your neighbor suffered from it?"

"Have you bought or received stolen goods? Or taken of those who could not (afford to) give?"

"Have you neglected your work or business to which you were hired? Have you broken your promise in matters of consequence?"

"Have you neglected or delayed to make restitution when it was in your power?"—*Preparation for Confession, Roman Catholic Manual.*

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

Send all offers and requests for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 80 Goffe Street, Quincy, Mass.

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Nichols, asking "*Shall* I send such a book to such a person?" before sending it, else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Nichols, saying that you *have* sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send these to the Book Club to be printed here.

OFFERS.

1. "Black Beauty" is offered by Miss Bertha Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.

The Cambridge Branch offers the following

books. Address Miss M. A. Vinal, 20 Lowell Street, Cambridge, Mass.

"The Household of Glen Holly"; "Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm"; "Mr. Bodley Abroad"; "Uncle, Peep and I"; "Aid to English Composition," Parker; "Elementary German"; "History of the English Language," Lounsbury; "One-book Course in English"; "Handbook of Punctuation"; "A Woman Tenderfoot," Grace Seton-Thompson; "The Lady of the Lake," Scott; "Poems by Robert Lowell"; "Poems by Edith Thomas"; "From the West to the West"; "Middlemarch," George Eliot; "English Country Life"; "Nature Thoughts," Jefferies; "Yeoman Fleetwood"; "Beauties of English Poetry"; "The Ward of the Sewing-circle."

Mrs. Lucy F. Young, Winchester, Mass., offers the following books to any one sending a two-cent stamp: Mitchell's "Biblical and Sabbath School Geography," 1849; Young's "Night Thoughts"; "History of the Heathen Gods"; "On the Study of Words," Richard Trench, 1859; Ollendorff's "German Grammar"; "Devotional Exercises for School and Families"; "Amos Barton," George Eliot.

Miss L. Freeman Clarke, 91 Mount Vernon Street, Boston, Mass., offers: Channing's "Complete Works"; "The Life of Channing"; "Lectures on the Epistles to the Corinthians," by John H. Thom (old, but good); "Commentary on Acts," by Livermore (also old, but good); "Ecce Homo"; "The Lord's Supper," by Lucretia P. Hale; "The Christian Doctrine of Forgiveness of Sin," by James Freeman Clarke. In sending these books, ministers will have the first choice.

REQUESTS.

Those who write to us for the first time must send the name and address of a minister as a reference. Without that the request will not be printed.

1. I would like very much to receive "The Rand-McNally Imperial Atlas of the World," also "Samantha at Saratoga," or any books by the same author, "Uncle Remus's Songs and Sayings," C. Harris. Mrs. Ennis Pegram, Dellaplane, North Carolina.

2. I would especially like to receive *The Ladies' Home Journal* for 1909, also some story and picture books for my three-and-a-half-year-old boy. Anything that relates to kindergarten training would be appreciated. Mrs. Verda Francis, R. F. D. No. 2, Van Alstyne, Texas.

3. Mrs. Daniel H. Gillespie, Naola, Amherst County, Virginia, is not well, and will enjoy and appreciate good literature.

4. Mrs. Mattie Francis, Howe, Texas, a widow, would be pleased to receive reading matter for herself and four boys, ages nine to fifteen.

5. Miss Nellie Gabbert, Grady, New Mexico, living forty miles from a railroad, asks for any magazines or books.

6. Miss Maud McFarland, Lokeeba, R. F. D. No. 3, Oklahoma, a girl of sixteen, asks for reading for herself, a brother aged twelve, an invalid aunt, and her father. Miss McFarland has had the care of the house for some years and the care of the aunt, with little opportunity of attending school.

7. Mrs. Wade Owen, Athens, Texas, asks for a fashion magazine, as she has three children to sew for. Would also like souvenir post-cards.

8. Mrs. Mary Lowder, R. F. D. No. 1, New London, Stanley County, North Carolina, asks for a "First Reader" or some suitable book for a boy of six.

9. Mrs. Lillie Davis, Shiloh, New Jersey, asks for Barnes's "Notes on Acts" and good reading for a boy of seventeen.

10. Mrs. Jessie Benton, Wadesboro, Box 19, R. F. D. No. 1, North Carolina, will be grateful for reading for herself, husband, and three little children. She asks specially for a dictionary.

11. Mrs. Mary J. King, Price, North Carolina, an invalid, will appreciate any good novels, stories or history.

12. The *Ladies' Home Journal* is asked for by Miss M. B. Landis, Oxford, North Carolina.

13. Mrs. I. M. Carter, Olympia, Wash., asks for "Stepping Heavenward" and "In his Steps."

14. Mrs. L. H. Drummond, Box 28, R. F. D. No. 1, Sandidges, Virginia, asks for reading for herself and little girls (ages not given) and souvenir post-cards.

15. Mrs. R. B. Ware, Lanesville, Virginia, desires reading for herself and for her boys and girls from six to twelve years of age.

16. Rev. C. W. Johnson, Ben Hur, Arkansas, would be pleased to receive any or all of the following books: "Gradatim," "Greek Heroes," "American Humor," "The Pleasures of Life," and would specially like Jevons's "Logic" and "Gradatim." Mr. Johnson is a "shut-in" much of the time, and will be thankful for any one of the above.

17. *Dear Cheerful Letter Friends,*—I wish to thank each and every one who has sent reading to my family. It has been a source of pleasure to us and to many others. We shall be grateful for any reading sent us, and will pass all on to others. We live in a remote place. Will some one send us some novels by E. P. Roe? My address is changed from Verano, Virginia, to Sandy Ridge, North Carolina. Thanking you most sincerely for your kindness, I remain, Mrs. James R. Brown.

18. The *Ladies' Home Journal* is asked for by Mrs. Lillian Thomas, Scott, R. F. D. No. 3, Oklahoma.

19. Mrs. B. F. Smith, Mountain View, Oklahoma, asks for *Ladies' Home Journal* and *Youth's Companion* for her lending library.

20. Mrs. Helen M. Hutchinson, Toledo, Iowa, care Sac and Fox (teacher in an Indian School), asks for Foster's "Story of the Bible" (the last for young children). Write to Mrs. Nichols before sending, lest two or more copies should be received.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

(*Continued from last number.*)

Ellen herself now felt quite anxious and unhappy. She began to be afraid that she had come to the end of her influence over her sister. As long as Annie would submit to be punished when she disobeyed, Ellen continued to have hope that she would gradually be reformed; but now she seemed to have broken away wholly from her sister's authority, and Ellen did not see what more she could do.

By and by Rodolphus and Annie became tired of playing on the rocks and Annie came down into the house again. She had recovered her good humor, and she came in singing. Ellen was sitting at a window at work. She was sewing. Annie came up to her and began to talk to her. Ellen, however, said very little in reply. She seemed thoughtful and sad.

"What is the matter with you, Ellen?" asked Annie.

"Don't you know what is the matter with me?" said Ellen.

"No," said Annie.

"It makes me feel unhappy to find that you are not going to be my girl any more."

"But I am going to be your girl," said Annie.

"No," said Ellen, "you will not obey me. You will not submit to your punishment, as you promised me you would do, and so I cannot consider you as my girl any more."

"But I am going to submit to my punishment the next time," said Annie. "That was only once. The next time I shall go to my punishment immediately."

"No," said Ellen, "I shall not ask you to go any more. I can't have you for my girl, and let you obey me when you please, and, when you don't please, disobey."

Annie stood a moment by Ellen's side, with a very serious expression upon her countenance, but without speaking a word. At length she drew a very long breath, like a sigh, and said,—

"Ellen, what shall I do, now."

She meant to ask what she should do for employment.

"I don't know," said Ellen, speaking in rather a mournful tone.

"Can't you think of anything for me to do?" asked Annie.

"I don't take any pleasure in trying to think of anything," replied Ellen. "Yesterday I did, for then you were a good girl and obeyed me; but to-day it is different. Every time I see you, it makes me feel unhappy. If you *could* find anything to do to amuse yourself, and would go away to some other place to do it, I should like it better than to have you stay here, and then, perhaps I should forget all about your disobedience—at least for a little while."

Annie, thus repulsed, went away to see if she could find Rodolphus or her mother, but her mind was ill at ease. The whole day passed without any material change. Ellen was silent and sad, and Annie felt as if she were friendless and alone.

Evening came, and at the usual time, which was about half-past seven o'clock, Ellen went up to put Annie to bed. There was nobody but Annie and Ellen at home. Their mother had gone to the village, and Rodolphus was out somewhere at play.

While Ellen was undressing her sister, and putting her to bed, she said to her in a very kind and gentle voice:

"I suppose you have not had a very happy day, and I don't suppose you feel very happy now. I am sorry for it. I would very gladly have gone and taken your punishment for you, if I could."

"I suppose," said Annie, timidly, "that the place under the shelf is not big enough for you to get in."

"That is not what I mean," said Ellen. "I should not have cared for that difficulty. If punishing myself for your fault would have answered, I would have done it very gladly. And, if you had gone yourself, how much better it would have been. The trouble would have been all over in five minutes, whereas now you have made yourself and me unhappy all day, and I suppose you don't feel very happy now."

"Not very," asid Annie, in a low voice.

"And then besides," said Ellen, "there is another trouble. It is time now for you to say your evening prayer, and the Bible says, 'If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear my prayer.' It is a sad thing to do wrong, so that God will not hear our prayers. Who else can take care of us?"

Annie was silent.

"But, Ellen," she said again, after a moment's pause, "I wanted to stay up there a little while with Rodolphus very much."

"Yes," said Ellen, "but you disobeyed mother in staying."

"But I did not think," added Annie, "that mother cared much about my coming down."

"She did not," said Ellen. "She cared very little about it. Still, you disobeyed her."

"And then I went down, too, immediately when you came for me."

"True," said Ellen, "but still you disobeyed mother."

Annie was silent.

"And now," said Ellen, "I don't know that there is anything more that I can do for you to-night, and so you may say your prayers and then I will go down."

By this time Annie had been put into bed, and Ellen, taking her seat upon a large chair which stood by the side of the bed, put her arms about Annie's neck and drew Annie's cheek close to her own, as if she pitied her, and loved her more than ever. It was some time before Annie began to repeat her prayer. Her heart told her that it was only a mockery to attempt to pray while she was persisting in wrong. At length, however, she began, and, though her voice was weak and trembling, she went through to the end.

Ellen remained a few minutes longer at her side, and then at last, kissing her again and again, in a manner more affectionate than usual, she bade her good-night, and, taking the candle, she went down stairs.—*Jacob Abbott in "Ellen Linn."*

[The Editor has ventured to change two words in this article. Mr. Abbott writes, "It is a sad thing to *displease God*." In speaking to a child of Annie's age, it seems wiser to say, "It is a sad thing to *do wrong*," for it is by our own fault that the barrier is made between us and God.]

NATURAL HISTORY.

THE SONG SPARROW.

Sparrows are of many kinds, and in a general way the different kinds look so much alike that the beginner in bird study is apt to find them confusing, if not discouraging. They will try his patience, no matter how sharp and clever he may think himself, and, unless he is much cleverer than the common run of humanity, he will make a good many mistakes before he gets to the end of them.

One of the best and commonest of them all is the song sparrow. His upper parts are mottled, of course, since he is a sparrow. His light-colored breast is sharply streaked, and in the middle of it the streaks usually run together and form a blotch. His outer tail feathers are not white, and there is no yellow on the wings or about the head. These last points are mentioned in order to distinguish him from two other sparrows with streaked breasts,—the vesper sparrow and the savanna.

By the middle of March song sparrows reach New England in crowds,—along with robins and red-winged blackbirds,—and are to be heard singing on all hands, especially in the neighborhood of water. They remain until late autumn, and here and there one will be found even in midwinter.

The song for which this sparrow is particularly distinguished is a bright and lively strain, nothing very great in itself, perhaps, but thrice welcome for being heard so early in the season, when the ear is hungry after the long winter silence. Its chief distinction, however, is its amazing variety. Not only do no two birds sing precisely alike, but the same bird sings many tunes.

Of this latter fact, which I have known some excellent people to be sceptical about, you can readily satisfy yourself,—and there

is nothing like knowing a thing at first hand,—if you will take the pains to keep a singer under your eye at the height of the musical season. You will find that he repeats one strain for perhaps a dozen times, without the change of a note; then suddenly he comes out with a song entirely different. This second song he will in turn drop for a third, and so on. The bird acts, for all the world, as if he were singing hymns, of so many verses each, one after another.

It is really a wonderful performance. There are very few kinds of birds that do anything like it. Of itself it is enough to make the song sparrow famous, and it is well worth any one's while to hear it and see it done. Nobody can see it without believing that birds have a true appreciation of music. They are better off than some human beings, at all events. They know one tune from another.

A lady correspondent was good enough to send me, not long ago, a pleasing account of the doings of a pair of song sparrows, which, as she says, came to her for six seasons.

"One year," she writes, "they happened to build where I could watch them from the window, and they did a very curious thing. They fed the little birds with all sorts of worms of different colors until they were ready to leave the nest: then the male brought a pure white moth and held it near the nest, which was in some stems of a rose-bush a few inches from the ground, on a level with the lower rail of a picket fence.

"One of the little birds came out of the nest at once and followed its parent, who went sidewise, always holding the dazzling white morsel just out of the youngster's reach. In this manner they crossed the lane, climbed the inclined plane of a woodpile, and passed through a fence and across a vegetable garden into an asparagus bed, in which miniature forest the little traveller received and ate the moth.

"Another nest was built on the bank of a brook on the farther side of a road. Out of this nest I saw two little fellows coaxed with these snow-white moths, and led across the dusty road into a hedge."

One or two experiences of this kind are sufficient reward for a good deal of patient observation. The singer of this pair of birds, my correspondent says, had ten distinct songs, one of them exceedingly beautiful and peculiar.

The song sparrow's nest is usually built on the ground, and the bird is one of several kinds that are known indiscriminately by country people as ground sparrows.

Song sparrows seem to be of a pretty nervous disposition, to judge from their behavior. One of their noticeable characteristics is a twitching, up-and-down, "pumping" motion of the tail, as they dash into cover on being disturbed.

People who live in the Southern States see these birds only in the cooler part of the year, but must have abundant opportunity to hear them sing as spring approaches.—*Bradford Torrey.*

MACK THE PARROT.

Mack is in the midst of a peculiar experience! He has a rival!—a primrose and white canary, by name Spungles Huntington Rollins. When the new-comer appeared, introduced by his owners, he was placed on a table near Mack, who looked at him with surprise, and immediately proceeded to "size him up," as the phrase goes. He curved his neck like a swan, and, turning his head on one side, gave him a patronizing and self-satisfied look,—evidence of the traditional "pride that goeth before a fall."

Spungles peeped now and then; but it was night-fall, and he was getting quiet and sleepy. Next morning, however, when he peeped to have his cover removed, he burst into a torrent of song such as Mack had never dreamed of. Patti, in her most glorious days, was not more inspired than was Spungles. Trills, *roulades*, followed each other in rapid succession. He took our cottage by storm. Preparations for breakfast stood still. Mack was overcome by surprise and wonder. At first he was a trifle aggrieved to find that he was no longer the star of the house, but soon he was lost in admiration.

"How *does* he do it?" he seemed to say to himself, and then he would watch the canary with almost critical acumen. When left alone, he would attempt an imitation, but it was labored and clumsy at the best. He began to hang his head and look dejected. I said: "Mackie, *you* can sing and talk, dance, whistle, and *think!* This little bird can only sing. We all have our limitations."

"Oh, oh," cried Mack, delightedly, reaching out his "hand" for me to give him some. At times Mack shows us his beautiful wings, asking for admiration, also he murmurs something to this effect: "*I* can have the fire!" which in winter he considers the acme of happiness.

Later.—Spungles stayed about a week, and finally won from Mack both love and admiration. We were careful not to arouse any jealousy, and always spoke to the little bird over Mack's shoulder, so to speak.

"Come, Spungles, give Mackie one of your beautiful songs!" and off the little fellow would go, in an ecstasy of song. For a day or two Mack tried in vain to get hold of the secret of his singing, but it was impossible. So in time he gave it up and simply listened. Towards the end of the canary's visit, Mack tried to make him talk. The two cages stood side by side on a table, and, when they were left alone, Mack began his lessons, saying very softly,—

"Mackie! Mackie!" but the canary could only stare at him, and finally burst into song, as if quite contented to be able to sing —as few canaries can sing.

For two or three days Mackie missed the little bird seriously; but many friends called, and in time he recovered his self-poise, although I fully believe that he is now "a sadder and a wiser" bird.—*Helen M. Knowlton.*

HOME RELIGION.

II.

"Well," said my wife, "cannot we contrive to retain all that is really valuable of the Sabbath, and to ameliorate and smooth away what is forbidding?"

"That is the problem of our day," said I. "We do not want the Sabbath of Continental Europe; it does not suit democratic institutions; it cannot be made even a quiet or a safe day, except by means of that ever-present armed police that exists there. If the Sabbath of America is simply to be a universal loafing, picnicking, dining-out day, as it is now with all our foreign population, we shall need what they have in Europe, the gensdarmes at every turn, to protect the fruit on our trees and the melons in our fields. People who live a little out from great cities see enough, and more than enough, of this sort of Sabbath-keeping, with our loose American police.

"It is true the Puritan Sabbath had its disagreeable points. So have the laws of Nature. They are of a most uncomfortable sternness and rigidity; yet, for all that, we would hardly join in a petition to have them repealed, or made wavering and uncertain for human convenience. We can bend to them in a thousand ways, and live very comfortably under them."

"But," said Bob, "Sabbath-keeping is the iron rod of bigots: they don't allow a man any liberty of his own. One says it's wicked to write a letter Sunday; another holds that you must read no book but the Bible; and a third is scandalized if you take a walk, ever so quietly, in the fields. There are all sorts of quips and turns. We may fasten things with pins of a Sunday, but it's wicked to fasten with needle and thread, and so on and so on; and each one, planting himself on his own individual mode of keeping Sunday, points his guns and frowns severely over the battlements on his neighbors whose opinions and practice are different from his."

"Yet," said I, "Sabbath days are expressly mentioned by Saint Paul as among those things concerning which no man should judge another. It seems to me that the error as regards the Puritan Sabbath was in representing it, not as a gift from God to man, but as a tribute of man to God. Hence, all these hagglings and nice questions and exactions to the uttermost farthing. The holy time must be weighed and measured. It must begin at twelve o'clock of one night, and end at twelve o'clock of another; and, from beginning to end, the mind must be kept in a state of tension by the effort not to think any of its usual thoughts or do any of its usual works. The fact is that the metaphysical, defining, hair-splitting mind of New England, turning its whole powers on this one bit of ritual, this one only day of divine service, which was left of all the feasts and fasts of the old churches, made of it a thing straiter and stricter than ever the old Jews dreamed of."

"But the little ones," said my oldest matron daughter, who had not as yet spoken, "they are the problem. Oh this weary labor of making children keep Sunday! If I try it, I have no rest at all myself. If I must talk to them or read to them to keep them from play, my Sabbath becomes my hardest working day."

"And, pray, what commandment of the Bible ever said children should not play on Sunday?" said I. "We are forbidden to work, and we see the reason why; but lambs frisk and robins sing on Sunday, and little children, who are as yet more than half animals, must not be made to keep the day in the manner proper to our more developed faculties. As much cheerful, attractive religious instruction as they can bear without weariness may be given, and then they may simply be restrained from disturbing others. Say to the little one, 'This day we have noble and beautiful things to think of, that interest us deeply; you are a child; you cannot read and think and enjoy such things as much as we can; you may play softly and quietly, and remember not to make a disturbance.' I would take a child to public worship at least once of a Sunday: it forms a good habit in him. If the sermon be long and

unintelligible, there are the little Sabbath-school books in every child's hands; and, while the grown people are getting what they understand, who shall forbid a child's getting what is suited to him in a way that interests him and disturbs nobody? The Sunday-school is the child's church and happily it is yearly becoming a more and more attractive institution. I approve the custom of those who beautify the Sunday-school-room with plants, flowers, and pictures, thus making it an attractive place to the childish eye. The more this custom prevails, the more charming in after years will be the memories of Sunday.

"It is most especially to be desired that the whole air and aspect of the day should be one of cheerfulness. Even the new dresses, new bonnets, and new shoes, in which children delight of a Sunday, should not be despised. They have their value in marking the day as a festival; and it is better for the child to long for Sunday, for the sake of his little new shoes, than that he should hate and dread it as a period of wearisome restraint. All the latitude should be given to children that can be, consistently with fixing in their minds the idea of a sacred season. I would rather that the atmosphere of the day should resemble that of a weekly Thanksgiving than that it should make its mark on the tender mind only by the memory of deprivations and restrictions."—*Harriet Beecher Stowe.*

WHAT ARE THE SOURCES OF BEAUTY IN DRESS?

"The first one is *appropriateness.* Colors and forms and modes, in themselves graceful or beautiful, can become ungraceful and ridiculous simply through inappropriateness. The most lovely bonnet that the most approved modiste can invent, if worn on the headof a coarse-faced invidious woman bearing a market-basket on her arm, excites no emotion but that of the ludicrous. The most elegant and brilliant evening dress, if worn in the daytime in a railroad car, strikes every one with a sense of absurdity, whereas both these objects in appropriate associations would excite only the idea of beauty. So a mode of dress obviously intended for driving strikes us as *outré* in a parlor, and a parlor dress would no less shock our eyes on horseback. In short, the course of this principle through all varieties of form can easily be perceived. Besides appropriateness to time, place, and circumstances, there is appropriateness to age, position, and character. This is the foundation of all our ideas of professional propriety in costume. The flowers, feathers, and furbelows which a light-hearted young girl of seventeen embellishes by the airy grace with which she wears them are simply ridiculous when transferred to the toilet of her serious, well-meaning mamma, who bears them about with an anxious face, merely because a loquacious milliner has assured her, with many protestations, that it is the fashion, and the only thing remaining for her to do.

"There are, again, modes of dress in themselves very beautiful and very striking, which are peculiarly adapted to theatrical representation and to pictures, but the adoption of which as a part of unprofessional toilet produces a sense of incongruity. A mode of dress may be in perfect taste on the stage, that would be absurd in an evening party, absurd in the street, absurd, in short, everywhere else.

"Now you come to my first objection to our present American toilet,—its being to a very great extent *inappropriate* to our climate, to our habits of life and thought, and to the whole structure of ideas on which our life is built. What we want, apparently, is some court of inquiry and adaptation that shall pass judgment on the fashions of other countries, and modify them to make them a graceful expression of our own national character and modes of thinking and living. A certain class of women in Paris at this present hour makes the fashions that rule the feminine world. They are women who live only for the senses, with as utter and obvious disregard of any moral or intellectual purpose to be answered in living as a paroquet or a macaw. They have no family ties; love, in its pure domestic sense, is an impossibility in their lot; religion in any sense is another impossibility; and their whole intensity of existence, therefore, is concentrated on the question of sensuous enjoyment and that personal adornment which is necessary to secure it. When the great ruling country in the world of taste and fashion has fallen into such a state that the virtual leaders of fashion are women of this character, it is not to be supposed that the fashions emanating from them will be of a kind well adapted to express the ideas, the thoughts, the state of society, of a great Christian democracy such as ours ought to be.

"What is called, for example, the style of dress, so much in vogue of late, we can see to be perfectly adapted to the kind of existence led by dissipated women whose

life is one revel of excitement, and who, never proposing to themselves any intellectual employment or any domestic duty, can afford to spend three or four hours every day under the hands of a waiting-maid, in alternately tangling and untangling their hair. Powder, paint, gold-dust and silver-dust, pomatums, cosmetics, are all perfectly appropriate where the ideal of life is to keep up a false show of beauty after the true bloom is wasted by dissipation. The woman who never goes to bed till morning, who never even dresses herself, who never takes a needle in her hand, who never goes to church, and never entertains one serious idea of duty of any kind, when got up in Pompadour style, has, to say the truth, the good taste and merit of appropriateness. Her dress expresses just what she is,—all false, all artificial, all meretricious and unnatural, no part or portion of her from which it might be inferred what her Creator originally designed her to be.

"But, when a nice little American girl, who has been brought up to cultivate her mind, to refine her taste, to care for her health, to be a helpful daughter and a good sister, to visit the poor and teach in Sunday-schools, when a good, sweet, modest little puss of this kind combs all her pretty hair into one mass of frowsy confusion, when she powders, and paints under her eyes, when she adopts, with eager enthusiasm, every *outré*, unnatural fashion that comes from the most dissipated foreign circles, she is in bad taste, because she does not represent either her character, her education, or her good points. She looks like a second-rate actress, when she is, in fact, a most thoroughly respectable, estimable, lovable little girl.

"It is not the fashion in America for young girls to have waiting-maids. In foreign countries it is the fashion. All this meretricious toilet—so elaborate, so complicated, and so contrary to nature—must be accomplished, and it is accomplished, by the busy little fingers of each girl for herself; and so it seems to be very evident that a style of hair-dressing which it will require hours to disentangle, which must injure and in time ruin the natural beauty of the hair, ought to be one thing which a well-regulated court of inquiry would reject in our American fashions."—*Harriet Beecher Stowe.*

THE EDITOR'S CORNER.

The editor ventures to speak again of a matter previously mentioned, but not easy for some of our members to understand,—the rule that forbids the giving of money, or the equivalent of money, in answer to begging letters. We will try to make this a little more plain.

You receive, we will say, a letter from a person in a remote State, giving a piteous account of poverty and distress. It seems to you as if it could do no harm to send a little substantial relief. But to how many persons has a copy of this letter been sent? Ten? Fifty? A hundred? The same person, remember, can easily select names from the *Cheerful Letter* (choosing those members who live in different States), from the *Open Window* (the organ of the Shut-in Society), from the Sunshine Society, which has branches all over the country, and probably from other associations. Our members forget this, each person is apt to think herself the only friend of the sufferer. As a matter of fact she may be (and sometimes is) one of an army of contributors.

Very early in our career a woman made an appeal for help, telling a very plausible story. Her statement was entirely false, as we succeeded in proving. But one feature of the situation was that the postmaster (in answer to questions) wrote to us that she was receiving "parcels" from all parts of the country.

He could not, of course, know how many of the *letters* she received contained money. It is evident that there are persons who drive a thriving business by begging through the mail. Since then, similar cases (not quite so bad) have occurred. It is a temptation to a person without principle to send out appeals for help to those who have not the means of investigation.

In one case a member wrote to the Editor and mentioned a very interesting woman with whom she had recently begun to correspond. She innocently asked whether she (the member) were the *only* correspondent? The Editor soon discovered that *twelve* branches had her on their list, and she had been connected with the Cheerful Letter Exchange from the very beginning. There would be no harm in this if financial aid is not given, or its equivalent. But in many cases it is given under the naïve supposition that the recipient is receiving from only one branch.

Even in the sending of books and papers it is important to consult or at least *inform* the Book Club Secretary. One person who wrote a very attractive letter, asking for books, received so many that it became a serious inconvenience before she could check the avalanche. A man, left a widower with

several little children, was found to be selling the contents of boxes received. Doubtless many a barrel of clothing has met the same destiny.

Dear friends, if you want your work to *tell*, and not to do harm, *follow the rules!* Where there is a *rule*, there is *reason* for the same. L. F. C.

THE AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

[Address everything relating to the Amusement Column to Mr. Henry A. Jenks, Canton Corner, Mass. Contributors are requested to write on one side of the paper only. Write name and address plainly (not necessarily for publication), and send the answers to the puzzles on a separate slip of paper.]

I.

TRIPLE CROSS-WORD ENIGMA.

My firsts are in jackscrew, but not in plumage.

My seconds are in eloquent, but not in supplicator.

My thirds are in ferrous, but not in jugal.

My fourths are in favose, but not in tent.

My fifths are in emerge, but not in lout.

My sixths are in relative, but not in cadence.

My sevenths are in salable, but not in wood.

My eighths are in only, but not in water.

My ninths are in nidget, but not in favor.

My whole gives the names of three Presidents of the United States.

II.

NUMERICAL PUZZLE.

Famous Americans. Each number represents a corresponding letter in the alphabet.

18, 21, 20, 8, 5, 18, 6, 15, 18, 4—2—8, 1, 25, 5, 19, a President.

8, 5, 14, 18, 25—23, 9, 12, 19, 15, 14, a Vice-President.

7, 5, 15, 18, 7, 5,—6, 18, 9, 2, 9, 5—8, 15, 1, 18, a Senator.

15, 12, 9, 22, 5, 18—23, 5, 14, 4, 5, 12, 12—8, 15, 13, 5, 19, a Judge of the Supreme Court of the United States.

14, 1, 20, 8, 1, 14, 9, 5, 12—7, 18, 5, 5, 14, 5, a Revolutionary General.

III.

SUBTRACTIONS.

Example: Take fifty from frigid, and leave a fish. Answer: Co-l-d, cod.

1. Subtract one thousand from a tenth of a cent, and leave diseased.

2. Subtract one hundred from to wind spirally, and leave an illuminating fluid.

3. Subtract fifty from to bend, and leave the opposite to in.

4. Subtract five from five, and leave an exclamation denoting contempt.

5. Subtract one thousand from manner, and leave a lyric poem.

IV.

LITERARY CONTEST.

Fill the blank spaces with the titles of popular books:—

In F— V— lived L— M—, A G— G—, kindness was B— I— T— B—, and she always favored T— U— D—. One Sunday she sat in T— O— P— P— with T— L— S—, and listened to the C— I—. Then walked home through T— F— and B— S— W— with T— M— S—. On reaching the H— O— T— S— G— and stepping B— C— D—, she took T— L— L—, and prepared supper for A— J— O— K—.

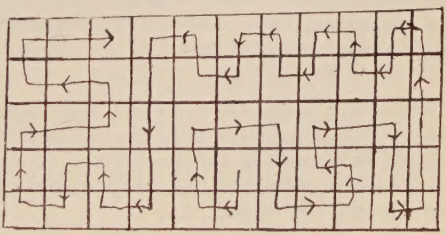
V.

A SQUARE.

1. A period of time.
2. To worship.
3. Kingly.
4. Synonym for convulsions.
5. Aids.

Answers to Puzzles in the February Number.

I. LABYRINTH OF LETTERS.



Abraham Lincoln.
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.
George Washington.

II. BEHEADINGS.—1. Teach—each. 2. Taunt—aunt. 3. Tear—ear. 4. Trip—rip. 5. Tale—ale.

III. ENIGMA.—Whom God loves, he gives a house in Seville.

IV. TRANSPOSED WORDS.—1. Pear—reap. 2. Cape—pace. 3. Tame—mate. 4. Tape—eat. 5. Lake—kale.

THE CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE.

OBJECTS.

1. To cheer and comfort the lonely and discouraged—not only invalids, but all who need cheer and comfort—by the interchange of letters and by gifts of books and periodicals.

2. To supply in some measure to young people in remote places the lack of schools, by gifts of school-books, letters, and, for those who desire it, correspondence classes on history, the natural sciences, and other interesting branches of study. If any desire to join such classes, they may send their names to our secretary.

3. Also to supply, to some extent, the lack of a church. One good sermon or sermon extract is printed in each number of the paper. These sermons are never doctrinal, but practical, and intended to cheer and comfort the sorrowful and aid in giving a vital religion without regard to sect or creed.

Any minister (of any sect) who receives this paper is cordially invited to distribute the copies of the *Cheerful Letter* received among lonely members of his parish, shut-ins or invalids of whom he may know. He is also invited to write to our headquarters (see address on this page) and give names and addresses of those who may be cheered and helped by becoming our correspondents.

No *theology* is disseminated in our paper. All the religious matter is intended merely to strengthen, cheer, and comfort those in need of such practical help.

Givers of books are reminded that only books of an instructive or wholesome nature should be offered in the Book Club. Classics, educational works, and standard novels are always acceptable.

LIBRARY NOTICE.

The Cheerful Letter Exchange offers to start a circulating library in any small community needing one, providing proper location and care can be furnished and satisfactory references supplied.

Apply to Mrs. Irene C. Rees, 51 Orchard Street, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

Subscriptions to *The Cheerful Letter* should be sent to the secretary, Mrs. L. B. Porter, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. Make checks payable to Lily Blunt Porter.

IMPORTANT NOTICES.

Headquarters of the Cheerful Letter Exchange are at 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass. The secretary, Mrs. L. B. Porter, may be found there on Mondays, Thursdays, and Fridays.

There will be a meeting of the Cheerful Letter Exchange on Friday, March 5, at 25 Beacon Street, Boston, at 10.30 A.M. All interested are cordially invited to be present.

THE HOME STUDY WORK of the Cheerful Letter Exchange aims to help those who are without school advantages.

Lessons by correspondence will be given in any school subject to those who wish to continue their studies, but who are unable to attend school.

Requests for these lessons should be sent to Mrs. Annie F. Hudson, 2 Maple Place, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

THE ATTENTION OF ALL READERS OF "THE CHEERFUL LETTER" IS CALLED TO THE FOLLOWING NOTICE:—

It is a rule of the Cheerful Letter Exchange that no one may ask for money, clothing, or other articles, except books and magazines.

The name of any person who fails to obey this rule will be dropped from our list. Any worker receiving such a request should send the letter at once to Headquarters.

The Editor asks POSTMASTERS who send notices of changes of address not to send these notices to the Editor, but to the Secretary, at 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

Send requests for books and letters of thanks to the Book Club Secretary.

Any subscriber not receiving the paper regularly is requested to notify the Secretary.

Chairman, Miss Helen L. Bayley, 399 Broadway, Cambridge, Mass.

Editor of "The Cheerful Letter," Miss L. Freeman Clarke, 91 Mt. Vernon Street, Boston, Mass.

Book Club Secretary, Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 80 Goffe Street, Quincy, Mass.

Secretary, Mrs. Lily Blunt Porter, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.